

## Connect Group Resources: Genesis 3: 1-24

### Introduction: The story so far

Humanity has been introduced in chapters 1 and 2 as being the pinnacle of God's creation. They are created in God's image, an angled mirror, to relate to him and co-labour with Him in reflecting him in stewarding work in his world. You have the 2 who are 1, co-labouring in unity, reflecting God and ruling like kings and queens. There is no more exalted position on earth!

But by the end of Genesis 3 that mirror is distorted and cracked in a thousand ways. Nothing is "very Good" anymore, and humanity is banished from God's garden. Our media and our own experience confirm daily that this is where we still are, but Genesis 3 gives us a window into answering the questions, "How have we got here, and why do we stay here?"

### 3:1-5

Let's recall... What is it that humans have been tasked to do in the world? 1:26-28

To do that, they need wisdom, but the question of this chapter is, from what source will they decide what the wise way to live is?

### Read verse 1.

Compare what the serpent says in verse 1 with the original command of 2:15-17. What is the emphasis of God's original command? What is the emphasis of the serpent's reframing of the command, and what impact does that have?

*God's original word was actually more about His gift of provision and freedom (2:16: The Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."). But the serpent's question twists God's word of provision and freedom to imply that God is holding something good back.*

### Read verse 2.

What differences are there between the woman's response and God's original command?

*The woman slightly extrapolates on what is said in 2:16,17. The prohibition has been altered from not to eat to not to touch.*

What may be some good things about the additional restriction?

*Discuss*

What may be some not so good things about the additional restrictions?

*Discuss*

### Verses 4-5

The serpent promises the woman and man could be "like God, knowing good and evil." In what ways are humans already like God from chapters 1 and 2?

*Discuss*

Compare all trees (except for the tree in the middle of the garden) 2:9 with the tree the woman is looking at in 3:6. What is the only difference between the descriptions?

*The fruit is desirable for gaining “Wisdom.”*

*Wisdom is what humans need to steward God’s world as He has been doing in Genesis 1 and 2. Yet rather than trust God and his word for what is good and bad, what is the wise way to live, the woman and man desire to reorient their lives away from God at the centre, to be autonomous by placing themselves at the centre, and make their own pronouncement of good and evil.*

### 3:6

In verse 6, the woman “saw” the fruit of the tree was “good”, “took” the fruit and “gave” some to the man. Up until this point of the Bible, who alone has been the subject of the verbs “saw... good”, “took”, and “gave”? (Consider Genesis 1:10, 17, 25, 31; 2:15, 21, 22)?

God.

What does this suggest the woman is doing, and how might this be the essence of sin?

*Humanity is usurping the prerogative of God. They are “de-godding” God, and now they are at the centre of the universe, the one who determines what is real and valid and how I should live. God is reduced to a thing more on the periphery. The essence of sin is not a failure to follow some arbitrary law, but my choice to reject God’s way and follow my self. It is to not trust what the good and loving creator God says, but trust myself or the false promises that some aspect of His creations says.*

### 3:7-13

How do humans seek to cope with their shame? (3:7-8)

*Hide behind trees, behind sowed fig leaves,*

*Shifting the blame from the man to the woman and God, and from the woman to the serpent.*

### 3:14-19

Summarise the consequences of sin for the man and the woman (Genesis 3:14-19), and how do these consequences relate to humanity’s stated purposes in God’s world?

- **Related to their purpose of filling the earth.** *The judgement against the woman relates first to her children and then to her husband, and is clearly linked to the role of the woman that is portrayed in chapters 1 and 2. The woman and her husband were to have enjoyed the blessing of children (1:28) and the harmonious partnership of marriage (2:18, 21-25). God’s words of judgement relate to these two points. What was to be the woman’s source of blessing – to be a marriage partner and have children – is now tainted by the curse.*
- **Related to their role of subduing the earth.** *The “good land” provided by the Creator (Chapters 1-2) is cursed. “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life” (v.17). Where before it was a source of God’s blessing and provision “you are free to eat from any tree in the garden”, is now a source of toil and frustration.*
- **Related to each other.** *“Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” This finds an echo in the Lord’s words to Cain in 4:7 (“it desires to have you but you must master it”); this suggests the author intended the two passages to be read together. If so, the sense of “desiring” in 3:16 should be understood as the wife’s desire to overcome or gain the upper hand over her husband. In the same way, the sense of “he will rule over you”. Within the context of the creation account in chapters 2 and 3, this last statement stands in sharp contrast to the picture of the man and the woman as “one flesh” and the picture of the woman as a “helper suitable for him”. The fall has had its effect on the relation of the husband and wife.*

3:20-24

How does God provide for their shame? (3:21)

*The man and the woman sew fig leaves, but God provides garments of skin. He works through a sacrifice to provide a lasting covering*

How has God likewise but ultimately provided our own guilt and shame? See 1 John 1:8-2:2

To close:

Pray for one another in pairs.